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ABSTRACT

The document provides an overview of the history and purpose of the educational service center for teachers of migrant and Indian children in the State of Washington. The center, a project of the Department of Education of Central Washington College, is located on an Indian reservation in the Yakima Valley in the central part of the state. The extensive truck farming and fruit crops in the area provide seasonal employment for the migrants, thus making an ideal location for the center. As stated, the purposes of the center are (1) to help assure children of migrant farm workers and American Indians pride in their cultural heritage and (2) to assist in the educational training so vital to the future well-being of these children. Among the components of the center are a media library, a curriculum development project wherein materials are geared to the cultural and language needs of migrant and Indian children, and a project of teacher and teacher-aide training. A bibliography is appended. (EL)

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THE CENTER FOR THE . . .

Study Of Migrant And Indian Education

A Project of the Department of Education – Central Washington State College – Ellensburg, Washington

. . . AN OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY AND PURPOSE OF AN EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER FOR TEACHERS OF MIGRANT AND INDIAN CHILDREN IN THE STATE OF WASHINGTON.

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OBJECTIVES OF THE CENTER

—Help coordinate educational programs for Migrant and Indian children in Washington State.

—Provide needed training, as identified, for para-professional, pre-professional, and professional personnel who work with Migrant and Indian children.

—Help develop programs and instructional materials for Migrant and Indian children.

—Disseminate information regarding significant programs, materials, and evaluations pertaining to Migrant and Indian children.

—Provide Evaluations of Center activities based upon stated objectives.

PEOPLE IN CONFLICT . . . .

It was not until the early 1960's that social and educational leaders of this country began to seriously examine the problems of the migrant agricultural worker. At the same time, research was pointing to the high dropout rate of the American Indian youth attending the public schools. It was becoming clearly obvious that the migrant and Indian children in this nation were experiencing many failures in the classroom.

These failures are perpetuated not only in the schools but in the community as well, and are borne out by statistical analyses that tell a story of unemployment, uninvolvement, and alientation from the larger society.

. . . there is no such thing as Indian education; rather the white man's educational system has been imposed upon Indians with little or no regard for their cultural or value systems. The only thing special about "Indian Education" has been its failure to educate Indian children (7).

The migrant child lives in a world few teachers know intimately. Before attempting to teach him, it is necessary to know not only his way of life, but to understand the problems created by this life and to learn how he thinks and feels about himself and others (8).

The problems of migrant and Indian people have not gone unnoticed in Washington State. The basic economy of Washington has depended greatly upon the contributions made by these two distinctly different cultural groups.

CONTRIBUTIONS . . . .

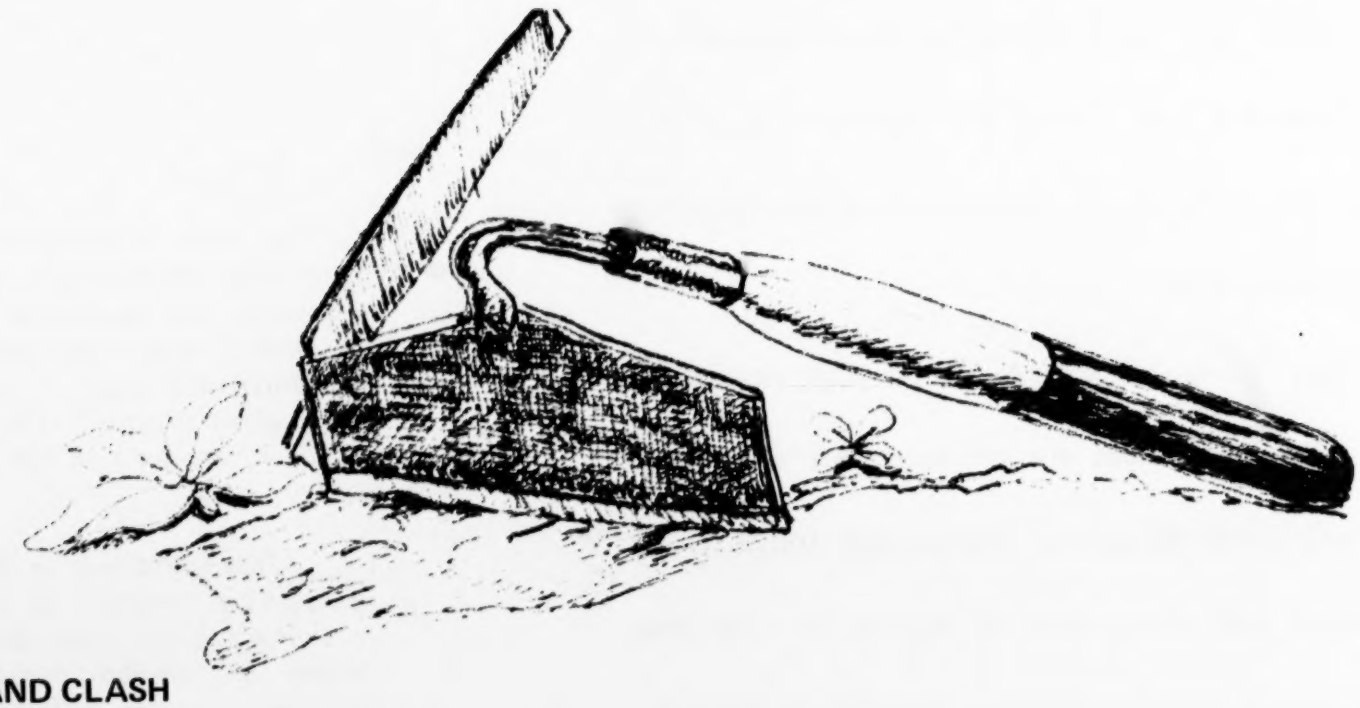
Yet, too often their contributions are overlooked, while the low economic and social status of migrants and Indians remain the focal point in the eyes of the public.

The migrant farm worker, although faced with the competition of increasing mechanized agriculture, is still the prime contributor to the success of Washington's agricultural industry. Washington State Indians have allowed their lands to be used for logging, fishing, and power industries. Many of Washington's great river dams have been built on Indian reservation land.

An estimated 20,000 migrant farm workers move into eighteen counties of Washington annually. While approximately 49 per cent are Anglo, and 10 per cent from other ethnic groups, an overwhelming number – 41 per cent – are Mexican-migrants.

It might be well to state at the outset that the future of the seasonal agricultural migrant and his dependents is no future at all. That is, within the next few years the migrant population, as we know it, will be substantially changed in both function and status . . .

. . . What I speak of is a striking change that will diminish greatly the numbers of migrant workers. Their 'special skills' will not be in great demand for, in truth, they do not have any 'special skills,' and, if helping professionals meet them again, they shall be met as ex-migrants living out their lives as dregs in the shameful corners of deprivation of our country which are termed urban ghettos (1).



. . . . AND CLASH

The non-English speaking background of these migrants cause additional problems of communication and cultural acceptance as they move in and out of rural communities.

The children of these laborers have severe educational deficiencies. Partly because of frequent travel, and partly because they also work the fields to supplement family income, school attendance is low and dropout rates are high.

Anglo migrant children attend school for an average of only 21 weeks of the school year. Mexican-migrant children often average only 17 weeks.

There are 36 Indian tribes in Washington, and approximately 10,000 Indian children attend the public schools. Like the migrant child, the Indian student is a frequent dropout from school.

Migrant workers know little or none of the security which comes from home and familiar surroundings.

In effect, the migrant worker is trapped. He has limited vocational skill of such a nature to face a declining marketplace for that skill, he has limited education, limited finance and a large family to support. He is being forced into unemployment and relief programs.

Where is he to turn? To escape this cycle he needs help (11).

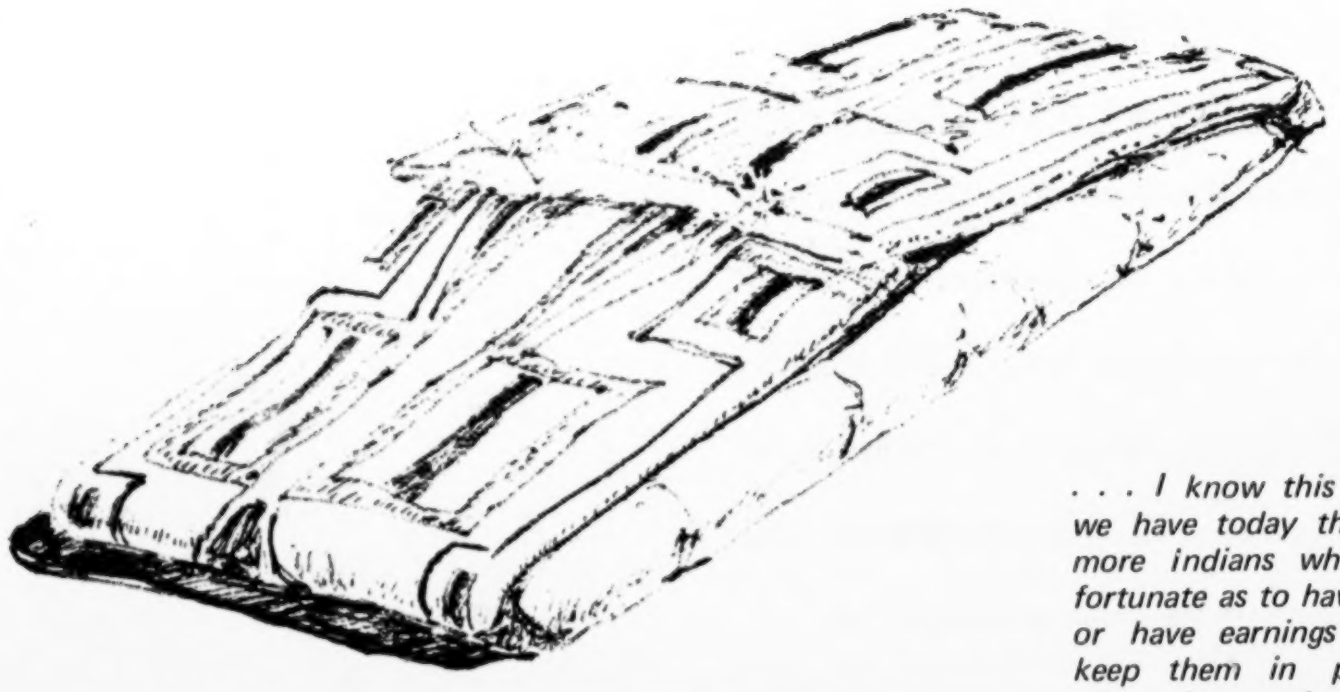
He is often two years behind his non-Indian peers in every academic area. Unlike the migrant, however, the Indian has a feeling of permanence about his home and his reservation.

Today, many Indians remain on their reservation lands where tribal ties are strongest, but where lack of industry prevents gainful employment. Indian youth are faced with the choice of moving into the large urban area in search of work, or remaining on the reservation where jobs are at a minimum.

The cultural clash between Indians living on a reservation, and residents of surrounding communities has not diminished despite years of living and working side by side. The Indian's unique status as the first American is still not fully appreciated by the majority culture. To the Indian, it is still the White Man's school, and the Indian child is often unable or unwilling to compete in the social and academic structure of the traditional public school.

The lack of educational opportunities are far-reaching, from Alaska to the Southwest . . . in the heavily urbanized and growing Northwest areas . . . we find the highest dropout rate, which exists in any area of the United States today.

. . . This condition is brought about most seriously as a result of cultural clash, clash that confronts the Indian students as they venture into public school. Possibly this condition is not really entirely the fault of the American Indian. This condition exists because of the physical needs of the American Indian. How can, for instance, an Indian student compete in a public institution where the average income perhaps, would be from $6,000 to $7,000 a year, when the family income of which he came would be possibly $1,500 a year . . . I want to point out here that the American Indian student is not accustomed to high competition. He is a nonparticipant in our general society, and therefore, we refer to the dropout as a pushout (10).



Another kind of alienation is experienced by the migrant child. He barely has time to establish himself as part of a class, learn the curriculum or understand his teacher, before he is moved once again to another town, another school and another classroom situation. Furthermore, his own culture, often rich in ethnic traditions, is seldom reflected in any school's curriculum.

The educational problems of migrant and Indian children are exemplified in the small rural school districts of the Yakima Valley. Here, educators are concerned with providing services to the children of a high population of migrant laborers residing on the largest Indian reservation in the State.

. . . I know this problem that we have today there are many more indians who are not so fortunate as to have two parents or have earnings sufficient to keep them in public schools, where they need money . . .

. . . If they are living in a public school area and they don't have the spending money, they they are not going to be happy and they're not going to pass. This is a major point I think. One of the unwritten laws of attending school is that if you don't keep up with somebody else, you are going to be unhappy, and you're not going to survive.

. . . Now, some of these Indians have a dropout rate of 100 percent. I know one little boy whose parents speak no English and he goes to a public school, but when he is home he has nothing — he has no place to study — he has no light — he has no one to say if his problem is right or wrong, if it is what is 7 times 3 even, if it's right or wrong (4).

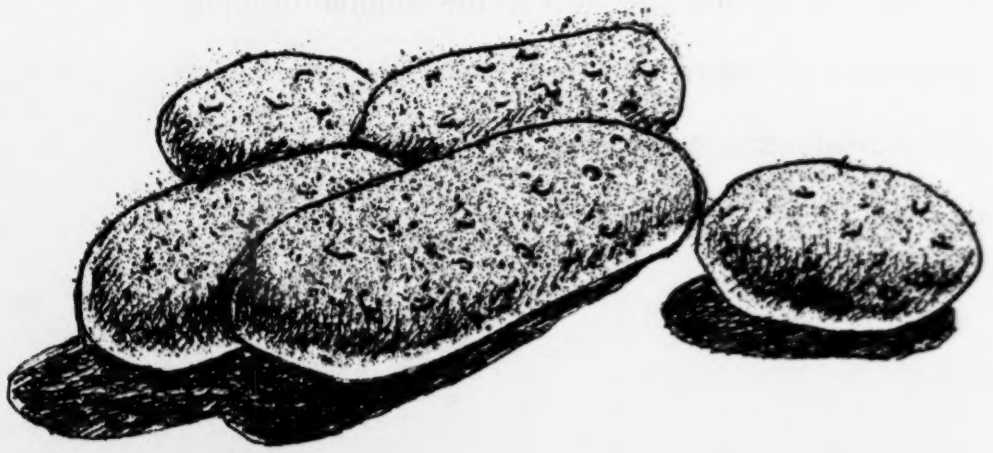
MEETING THE CHALLENGE . . . .

In 1968, the Chairman of the Department of Education at Central Washington State College accepted the challenge of tackling the educational problems of migrant and Indian youngsters. Meeting with educators from the public schools, leaders of the Yakima Indian Nation, and members of the Mexican–American community, a commitment for action was undertaken.

As a result of this commitment, and with support from the State Supervisor of Migrant and Indian Education, the **CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF MIGRANT AND INDIAN EDUCATION** was established as a project of Central Washington State College. The Center was initially funded under Title I, P.L. 89-750 for migrant education – administered through the State Office of Public Instruction.

This location is significant, first, because it is on a reservation, and second, because it lies in the heartland of the agricultural industry of the Northwest. The Yakima Valley is situated in the central part of the State of Washington at the base of the eastern slopes of the Cascade Mountain

In migrant education, as in other educational efforts, passive or reluctant support foreshadows failure. Thousands of migrant youngsters will reach far less than their potential; their parents will contribute much less to the life of their communities; local, year-round students will receive less enriched educational experiences; the communities themselves will not benefit to the extent that they could; and educators will be less than the educators they should be (2).



range. The abundance of major fruit crops such as apples, pears, cherries, along with extensive truck farming of the region, provides seasonal employment for a large migrant population.

. . . . CENTER IN ACTION

The purpose of the Center is to help assure children of migrant farm workers and American Indians pride in their cultural heritage, and assist in the educational training so vital to their future well being in our society.

A director and eight professional educators are committed to these basic goals. Assisted by supportive staff, they work together to serve public schools around the state.

An eighteen-member Advisory Committee, comprised of representatives from the target populations served by the Center, help guide and direct the professional staff.

When we compound the problems of poverty with geographic isolation, inadequate pre-service and inservice education of teachers, irrelevant curricular materials, minority group problems, problems of bilingualism, large families and little individual attention and communication within the family, and few current opportunities to change or escape from the environment, then we are cognizant of the challenges confronting us (6).

A survey of the immediate educational concerns of school administrators showed that relevant curriculum, teacher and aide training, pre-professional training, and coordination of programs and efforts are priority needs in combating educational problems.

MEDIA LIBRARY

Teachers of migrant and Indian children need instructional materials that are relevant to the children's backgrounds and individualized to meet their specific deficiencies. Therefore, a major component of the Center's program is devoted to curriculum and the use of multi-media materials.

The Media Center circulates books, films, tapes, and other audiovisual materials throughout the state. A resource collection of print materials is also available for teachers to research and write new curriculum.

Audiovisual equipment is available on loan to schools with enrollments of migrant or Indian students. The Center provides training in the operation of all equipment, including the video tape recorder.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The Center staff develops guides for teaching migrant and Indian students as well as original materials for the classroom.

Many things need to be, and can be, undertaken to improve the school's serving Indian children. The curriculum needs to be reformed, particularly in the lower grades, to take into account what the Indian child knows when he comes to school.

His language, his home, his surroundings, his cultural background should all be taken into account. Any effective educational program starts with what the individual knows and builds on that base; education for Indian children has not. The curriculum also needs to be modified to include more material on the history, the culture, and values of Indian people to help perpetuate knowledge of the special culture of the people the school serves and thus to develop a sense of pride in the individual Indian as to who he is and who his people are (7).

The Artifacts of Mexico is one example. This large collection of folk art is supplemented by a book describing the use and history of each object.

Since the language abilities of migrant and Indian children are often minimal, the Center initiated a "games" approach to language development. To play the game, children must use oral language skills. This unit has been especially successful with Mexican-American children who hear little English spoken in their homes.

. . . . TEACHER'S AIDE TRAINING

Many school districts have hired bilingual teacher aides and home visitors to improve communication between families and schools. The Center provides extensive teacher and teacher-aide training for these districts. Sessions conducted throughout the State include cultural awareness, areas of curriculum, professional ethics, and the physical and emotional development of children.

Districts are encouraged to develop their own training programs and to make use of resource people within the school or community. Many districts have recognized the benefits of utilizing students as aides in the

. . . When she came in to see the Artifacts she quickly recognized some things . . . "My mother has one like that"... The library aide was smart enough to let her show the items to other members of the class, explain their uses, and tell what she knew about them. As a result this little youngster gained status in the group and a feeling of the importance of her own heritage that did a great deal for her. We have been so pleased to note a much greater assurance and confidence with which she approaches her work and other youngsters. Surely what your display did for this one child justified much of your effort . . . (9).

classroom. Students beginning in the intermediate grades are now serving as tutors or aides in the office, playground, or library.

CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS

Faculty members from Central Washington State College conduct Education courses during evenings and weekends at the Center. Teachers, administrators, and aides throughout Central Washington take advantage of these classes.

The Center also sponsors conferences and workshops which last from a few days to several weeks. All are field-oriented and actively involve participants with the migrant or Indian people in local communities.

STUDENT TEACHING

The College's Department of Education has taken leadership in the area of training teachers for work with migrant and Indian children. Student teachers are enrolled in a 32 week program which takes place in and around the Center in Toppenish.

The teacher training program begins with a communications process workshop in July, designed to acquaint the students with each other, their supervisor, and the goals of the program.

. . . Finding out about all the materials was the high point. I especially am interested in "Shuck Loves Chirley" as a handy guide for the classroom teacher who can't understand why the kids can't say those sounds right. I learned much about the differences in the language just from that little exposure.

. . . I learned a great deal from every session, particularly those relating to cultural and language problems and their effect on classroom learning. We "Anglos" need to be told sometimes over and over . . .

This is a new development which has much potential. It is a developing thing in Migrant and Indian Education which is feeling its way along. I think that it can be a solid contributor to the education of these minority groups. We try to go along with new programs in the hope that we will improve our district program (9).

FIELD EXPERIENCE

In August the group is involved in an experience program requiring them to work in a rural community. Students may assist teachers in summer school, Head Start, or day care programs. Or, they may find employment in the fields or food processing plants. The purpose of the August Field Experience is to give these students a better understanding of the lifestyles of migrant and Indian people.

Beginning in September, student teachers serve as aides in classrooms with large numbers of migrant or Indian students. At the same time, they take courses in Education and Psychology at the Center. This allows students to apply coursework theory to the classroom situations they are involved in each day.

In essence, the learning laboratory for these prospective teachers is the public school and the community. The program culminates with the student being assigned a classroom for a three-month internship.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Special projects are often initiated by the Center. The Center has helped districts develop summer school programs for children needing remedial instruction. These programs have taken place on the campus of

. . . It is starting to move in the direction we would like to see it operate, especially in the training of teachers to come into migrant and Indian classrooms . . . (9).

. . . he had been noticing the yawns and general fatigue of many pupils in the classroom. After questioning one boy who had been sleeping during class, he found that this student and many others in the school, had been getting up at three-thirty or four in the morning to cut "grass" (asparagus) in the fields . . .

. . . I decided to go into the fields with the students, and gained permission from the farmer to work with them . . . I didn't show up until after five a.m. that morning and I was the last one there.

. . . After a few hours cutting, I wondered how any student could sit in class all day without going to sleep . . . some of these students return to the fields after school at night and cut until dark (3).

Central Washington State College, in local communities, and at Camp Chapparal on the Yakima Indian Reservation.

Leadership conferences for educators and community leaders also take place through the Center. Participants include people from local, regional and national levels. As a result of one meeting, Indian tribes and public school districts in the State formed a statewide association on Indian education. The purpose of the cooperative organization is to share programs, materials, ideas, and problems with one another.

Parents and educators from local communities meet at the Center to plan programs for Head Start, Follow Through, and other educational projects. Family service agencies have also met at the Center to discuss solutions to drug, alcohol and other social problems, and to combine efforts and programs.

COORDINATION AND DISSEMINATION

The Center for the Study of Migrant and Indian Education is a coordinating agent for meeting the educational needs of migrant and Indian children. It disseminates information about innovative programs and materials from all over the United States to Washington teachers of these boys and girls. Since the Center

The results of the Center will filter down to the kids. When the tide comes in it raises all the boats. When the work of this Center filters down it will help all the children and all of the teachers in our schools (9).

functions on a statewide basis, it is continuing to broaden its sources of funding.

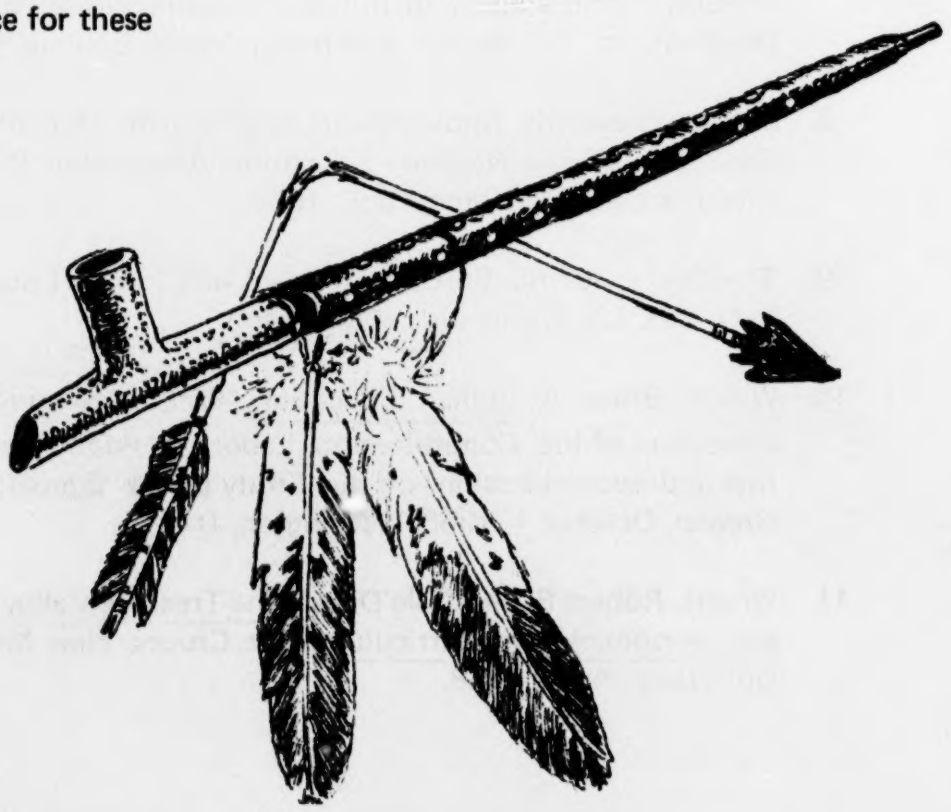
HAS IT MADE A DIFFERENCE?

While the long-range benefits to children may not yet be determined, the momentum created by the Center since 1968 is already reflected in the increased demand for services.

This demand from teachers, students, and administrators indicates that the Center is making a difference in the classroom environment of migrant and Indian children. Hopefully, the difference will result in increased academic success and genuine social acceptance for these youngsters.

A PLACE IN THE SUN

A place in the sun
where the mind meets the soul
where the rich meet the poor
where the brave meets the coward
where the cat meets the mouse
where the hunter meets the hunted
where the fisherman meets the fish
where the shoes meet the sidewalk
where the elders meet the youth
where the men meet the boys
where the mountain meets the lowland
where the love meets the prejudiced
where the hour meets the seconds
where the light meets the shadow
where the ground meets the leaves
where the eraser meets the blackboard
where the teachers meet the students
where the sea meets the shore
A place in the sun (5).



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